



ADDRESS

DELIVERED BEFORE

THE MISSOURI HISTORICAL SOCIETY,

JULY 19, 1878,

*THE ANNIVERSARY OF THE DISCOVERY OF THE MISSISSIPPI BY
MARQUETTE AND JOLIET.*

By JOHN GILMARY SHEA.

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ADDRESS.

MEMBERS OF THE MISSOURI HISTORICAL SOCIETY, LADIES AND GENTLEMEN OF ST. LOUIS: It is with singular diffidence that I rise to address you on an occasion which excites such a noble enthusiasm, and displays in your State such a laudable desire to commemorate the historic past.

The Queen City of the Mississippi valley, so rich in all the traditions and legends of bygone days, with all its romantic associations, could summon many of her own sons, many from the proud State of Missouri, many an orator from the length and breadth of the Mississippi valley, who would invest the theme of this day's celebration with all the heaven-given genius of the orator and poet.

Before such an audience as I see gathered here I feel all the more deeply the great honor you confer upon me, and while I thank the Missouri Historical Society and the citizens of St. Louis for the distinction, I congratulate them that an eloquent son of Missouri is to address you, and by his glowing words make this anniversary indelible in your minds.

Called by your flattering choice from a scholar's seclusion on the shores of the Atlantic, I find myself in the midst of a brilliant assemblage, welcomed by the merit, the learning, the wealth, the culture, and refinement of the real centre of our great republic, the city of St. Louis.

You have dedicated this day to an event in our early history, but one so intimately connected with the greatness of the country that you evoke for it all that can kindle your enthusiasm and exalt it to a niche of honor and respect.

And yet there are few events in human annals that in the persons of the chief actors, or the attendant circumstances and accessories, seem so incommensurate with the wonderful

results that ensued, results fraught with interest to millions of those whom Christianity and civilization had fitted for the highest and noblest use of the blessings bestowed by a kind Providence.

Two hundred and five years ago this very day two bark canoes were launched at a Quappa town near the Arkansas to stem the mighty tide of the Mississippi. There seemed little in this to give the actors a place in history, measured by the standard of those who see greatness only in the victorious battle-field and no laurels that are not crimsoned with human blood. But let us study this group of peaceful conquerors. There are no other white men within six hundred miles of them. The Spaniards in St. Augustine, which had just celebrated its first centennial, and the English in their new settlement at Charleston were nearer by several hundred miles than any countrymen of the bold explorers.

Alone in the wilderness, with nature in all her majesty speaking her lessons from river and plain, from wooded upland and savannas rich in tropic vegetation, stands a thoughtful man in the worn garb of a missionary, a face that impresses you with the holiness of his life, a frame apparently ill fitted for the rugged career which has aged it prematurely—a man of intellect, piety, and action, his nearest companion, clear and frank, a man of energy and power, with a bearing of culture, study, and observation. His bronzed features, his garb of French frontiersman could not for a moment induce you to confound him with the coarser element with which his life threw him in contact.

Marquette and Joliet stand at the water's edge amid a crowd of Indians from the nearest village, their five bontmen, who had plied their paddles on many a stream and lake, push the light barks into the waters of the Mississippi. A gleam of pride and satisfaction, of holier joy and consolation, light up the countenances of the two explorers.

It was, indeed, a moment of triumph. They had solved a question of geographical science that had long engaged the thoughts of missionary and pioneer, though the learned societies in Europe knew nothing of it. The great Western river, at first dimly heard of, gradually more clearly recognized in Indian talks

had been reached, had been navigated with its current for a whole month ; its course was known, its value and importance were known, and now these two, crowned with success, were to bear back to civilization the knowledge acquired, and to tell astonished Europe that the canvas-winged ship could penetrate into the very heart of the American continent by one of the mightiest rivers of earth.

As they stood there on the 17th of July, 1673, they felt that their work was accomplished. Its importance they saw more clearly than most of their generation, but with all their gaze into futurity they would have been prophets, indeed, could they have dreamed of the Mississippi as we behold it, could they realize what I behold.

What a change from that solitary group of white men on the river's brink, with a handful of savages and a wretched Indian hamlet, to the millions in splendid cities and towns, in cultured farms and teeming plantations ; the home of science, literature, art, invention ; bearing the richest fruits of material, æsthetic, intellectual development.

We meet to share the joy of Marquette and Joliet on that memorable day, and to pay our tribute of honor to the two men whose studies led to the expedition, who so bravely undertook and so satisfactorily effected the exploration.

Joliet and Marquette are well worthy of a nation's reverence. The discovery of the Mississippi was not a mere chance encounter in an aimless roving. It was well considered, planned on information long and patiently acquired, and carried out with prudence, caution, and exact observation.

Spain knew of a great river traversing this land, but she took no steps to explore it or study its future bearing on the interests of mankind. The remnant of the expedition under Pamphilo de Narvaez may be pardoned for giving no great thought to the mighty river which formed such an obstacle in their fatal course from Florida of disaster to some outpost of their countrymen in Mexico. Soto, "the fourth and greatest tyrant," as Las Casas calls him, reached the river and ascended it, unconscious that it was to be his tomb. It is not impossible that he stood with his gaunt and half-naked band, red with Indian blood, and

pursued by the imprecations of desolated villages, stood on this very spot where we gather to-day. But their knowledge of the river was acquired in vain. The Spaniards in New Mexico had sent out expeditions penetrating through the plains to many of the western branches of the great river, and in all probability to its banks.

But the object of all search on their part was gold, and gold on the surface. With no evidence at once of the existence of that metal, Spain neglected to take any higher view or to make the knowledge obtained by her explorers of any advantage to herself or mankind. Stories of fabled empires that out-rivalled in gold and silver the pomp of Mexico or Peru light up some of these New Mexican accounts, and were borrowed by La Hontan and Sageman, but they failed to tempt the successors of Philip and Charles to occupy the valley of the great river.

The handful of Jesuit missionaries in Canada looked at it in a different light. It is to their great credit that, while pursuing their noble attempt to convert the red men, they were far-sighted, impressed with the resources and advantages of this great country, and confident of its future. Few in number, for in a period of two hundred years they numbered in all their colleges and missions only two hundred and twenty, and rarely more than thirty at any one time, scattered from the Gulf of St. Lawrence to the banks of the Mississippi, these cultivated men studied the topography, resources, and products of the country, in the sole view of the future extension of European and Christian influence, that a new christendom might grow up here and the wild tribes be won to its bosom.

Doing their duty manfully in the living present to the little native flock that each could gather, chastening as they could the rough pioneer, and holding him to the civilization he left far behind, the missionaries studied the new land of America. Year by year they reported the information they acquired of the unknown interior of America, the relation of tribes and languages, the natural features and pathways. Pushing far ahead of the most daring trader, they reached tribe after tribe, till then unheard of, gave them the first elementary knowledge of religious truth, and

planted the cross. Many fell : the accident of the way, the prowling savage, the cold-blooded torture at the hands of ferocious war parties, all these thinned the ranks of the zealous missionaries, but they never checked their advance. Spain might abandon lands where there was no gold glittering on the surface ; the French Jesuits never recoiled ; the sufferings each endured, the fate of their companions only quickened their courage and stimulated them to further and nobler exertion.

I can pay tribute to these heroic men with no fear of being supposed partial. Bancroft, Parkman, Sparks, Kip, all thoughtful writers of our country, whose theme it has ever been, are in absolute harmony on the point. Standing in this valley, which French zeal appreciated and occupied, I pay my tribute freely, for I am not of French origin ; the ancestors of mine then in the land were among the stern settlers of the New England coast, men narrower in their views, thinking less of humanity at large than of themselves, knowing two hundred years ago less of the country a hundred miles from the coast than the French did of tens of thousands of square miles of the interior.

Studying out rude maps, traced by Indians on the sand or on bark, the Jesuit missionary became satisfied that while no large stream entered the lakes, the country to the south was drained by a mighty river, its name among the tribes they knew was just this, Great River—Mississippi. Where did it rise ? Whither did it flow ? Marquette, Dablon, Allouez recognized the Wisconsin as evidently a branch of this great river, and urged the Canadian Government to authorize or attempt its exploration. A knowledge of its course and mouth might be of incalculable advantage to France, and open a wide realm for Christian missionary effort. The representations seem to have found little favor, but when Father Dablon, returning from years of mission labor in Wisconsin, became superior of his order at Quebec he was brought into direct contact with the governor and intendant. His vivid descriptions of the West and of its wonderful advantages, the ease with which an exploration could be made of the great river, told at last on Talon, whose able administra-

tion of Canadian affairs as intendant won him the name of the Colbert of New France.

Just as he was departing to France he recommended the project which the Jesuits had so much at heart to that remarkable character in French-American history, Louis Count de Frontenac. That haughty noble had just in all his pomp taken possession of the castle of Quebec as Governor-General of New France. Louis Joliet, a young man of education, skilled as a hydrographer and surveyor, well acquainted with the West, who had already nearly reached the banks of the Mississippi, was commended by Talon to the governor as a fit person. The Jesuit missionaries were not alluded to at all, as the count was strongly prejudiced against them, and would have done nothing to contribute to any result redounding to their credit.

The official record states that "Joliet was sent to the country of the Maskouteing to discover the South sea and the great river they call the Mississippi, which is supposed to discharge itself into the sea of California."

This brief notice in Frontenac's despatch shows how little importance he really attached to the expedition, and what feeble results he could have anticipated.

Louis Joliet set out with no well-equipped scientific corps such as governments now send forth; he seems to have gone alone with no aid but such as he himself could command. No appropriation from the treasury was made for an expedition that was to lift the veil from unknown America.

Indeed, had the expedition been one of parade and apparent honor, some one of the petty courtiers of the petty court of Quebec, some man boasting of rank or favor in France, would have been chosen. The mad plunge into the unknown might be left without jealousy to a man who could never be a rival—to Louis Joliet, American born, American bred, well educated, indeed; a keen observer of men and nature, unwearied and undaunted in peril, with the mathematical knowledge to map out the discoveries he might make.

At Point St. Ignace, where the waters of three lakes mingle in the straits of Mackinaw, where Marquette's chapel and remains have been so recently discovered, Joliet stepped ashore one bleak December day. It was the

Feast of the Immaculate Conception, a day especially dear to the missionary whom he was to meet, and with whom the project was one of constant thought. As Marquette himself tells us in the devotional outpouring that characterizes his narrative, he had for years sought of heaven, in prayer through Mary, grace to bear the cross to the tribes on the Mississippi River. His prayers seemed answered, when issuing from his chapel he met Joliet, who came on this day of all others, with orders from the governor and intendant to make the discovery with him.

No two men, perhaps, were better fitted; yet they spent the whole winter collecting all possible information and drawing up a preliminary map, which would be a treasure beyond all price had it survived for us to gaze upon to-day. On it they laid down their route to the Mississippi, the course of the river as they conjectured it, the affluents to be met on the way, the tribes they should probably encounter. The names obtained were doubtless mainly in the Ottawa and other Algonquin languages, and, transferred to their later map, have in many cases continued to our times.

Incidental illusions in Marquette's brief and unpretentious narrative give us some idea of this map and of the wonderful extent to which the missionaries had acquired accurate knowledge of the country. He refers to the lakes from which the Mississippi originated in a matter-of-fact way, as a point already known, although the Government in our day sent out an expedition to verify the fact, when Schoolcraft gave an absurd name to the lake source. They had heard of a great river emptying into the Mississippi from the west, rising in a water-shed that sent streams and rivers to the Pacific. All this was laid down on that map, though no white man had ever entered the country. There are many maps of Joliet's in existence, some of which need solution, and one of them may be really this conjectural map, so accurate as to be supposed the work of a later day.

When genial spring had loosed the icy bonds that locked the northern lakes and rivers they selected five experienced men to paddle the two stanch bark canoes, which had doubtless been carefully built during the long winter. Then, with no outfit but a stock of

dried meat and parched corn, the party left the strand of St. Ignace, May 17, 1673. Placing his voyage under the protection of Mary, as Marquette tells us, he promised to give the name of the Immaculate Conception to the river, should they succeed in exploring it, and to the first mission he might be able to establish. The old Algonquin name under which he first heard the river spoken of has never yielded to that which his piety suggested, but the church in the little ancient town of Kaskaskia, whose annals your society has so creditably gathered, still shows that Father Marquette kept his vow.

Across the familiar waters of Lake Michigan, through Green Bay and up the Fox River they sped their course to a Miami and Kickapoo town, the limit of previous exploration. Undeterred by wild Indian stories of frightful monsters, of demons that swallowed all newcomers—tales whose meaning they were soon to see—accounts of heat so intense as to kill them, and of what was really to be feared, war parties eager for scalps, the explorers, commending themselves to God, launched their canoes on the Wisconsin and glided down its current amid its vine-clad isles, its wooded and prairie shores, till fear was lost for a time in admiration of the beauties of nature. Their entrance into the unexplored became mysterious by the utter absence of man; no sound of human industry, no smoke of distant camp-fire reached their senses, strained to catch every impression.

Without having encountered a human being during their voyage down the Wisconsin, they beheld their canoes on the 17th of June glide safely into the mighty river of so many prayers and hopes. They gazed up its clear waters as if to scan the course it took from its northern lakes, then turned their bows southward and with swelling hearts entered the new realm. They were on a river broad and deep, like no other they had seen since they left the St. Lawrence. They were on the Mississippi. The prairies, that seemed to stretch away endlessly, teeming with game, with herds of buffalo and deer, with scarcely a tree or mountain visible, told them that the region was different from all they had yet known. Strange animals on the shore, stranger fish in the waters, excited their wonder. On and on

they went, ever on the alert, keeping well off the shore, landing only at night to light a fire and cook a frugal meal. Thus the explorers in their two canoes descended the river mile after mile till they began to imagine themselves in a land where the face of man was never seen. The solitude was overpowering. The fair land they expected to find studded with Indian villages gave no sound, no sight, no symptom of human life. It seemed like some vast ocean, grand, smiling, wonderful after a storm in which it had swallowed up all on its treacherous bosom.

A week after entering the river they at last saw a trail in a beautiful prairie. Joliet and Marquette, leaving their men in the canoes, landed, and, too full of emotion to speak, followed the trail in silence. A village was soon in sight with clustering cabins; but even here all was still. There was no one to notice their approach.

They halt at last. The Indian hail bursts from their lips. As the shrill sound rolls over the prairie the whole tribe dash out in amazement. Already the black gown of the Jesuit was known by name to distant tribes that never saw a white man. Marquette's character was at once recognized, and chiefs advancing tell him in reply to his questions that they are Illinois.

They then invite the French to their village. A naked sachem met them at a cabin door, his hands with open fingers held up between him and the sun. His attitude and welcome gave Longfellow one of the most beautiful passages in "Hiawatha."

"How beautiful is the sun, O Frenchman! when thou comest to visit us! All our town awaits thee, and thou shalt enter all our cabins in peace."

This was the noble welcome of the western shore of the Mississippi to civilization and Christianity. Then the great calumet of peace was smoked, and a friendship began that time never dimmed.

When the missionary unfolded the object of his sacred calling, the sachem replied: "I thank thee, Blackgown, and thee, Frenchman, for taking so much pains to come and visit us; never has the earth been so beautiful, nor the sun so bright as to-day; never has our river been so calm, nor so free from rocks, which

your canoes have removed as they passed ; never has our tobacco had so fine a flavor, nor our corn appeared so beautiful as we behold it to-day. I pray thee, take pity on me and all my nation. Thou knowest the Great Spirit who has made us all, thou speakest to him and hearest his word ; ask him to give me life and health, and come dwell with us that we may know him."

The spell of mysterious solitude was broken. They had met a tribe of Indians to find friends and a welcome. New and valuable information was gained, and the Illinois, after entertaining the missionary and his party, presented him a great calumet of peace.

They could now advance with lighter hearts, bearing a symbol new to them, but henceforth to bear an important part in history, the calumet or pipe of peace.

Indian legend represents the great peace pipe as a gift of the Great Spirit to men. Tired of their wars, he bade them, as Longfellow tells it :

" Bury your war-clubs and your weapons,
Break the red stone from this quarry,
Mould and make it into peace-pipes,
Take the reeds that grow beside you,
Deck them with your brightest feathers,
Smoke the calumet together,
And as brothers live henceforward."

Cheered and encouraged by their reception, the explorers sped on their way, gazing in astonishment at the almost inaccessible rocks, where some Indian artist had depicted in vivid colors monstrous forms which for ages defied the hand of time.

But while they sailed down the clear, pure waters of the Mississippi, they were startled by a fearful noise that broke upon their ears. They had reached the mouth of your mighty river ; and the Missouri, swollen by a rainy season, came bearing as trophies hundreds of trees torn from the alluvial banks. As these shot out into the Mississippi, forming little islands as they matted together, the explorers were startled. It was a more fearful sight than they had yet encountered, a real danger in which they beheld the devouring monster described in the imagination of the Indian.

The great Missouri—Pekitanoui, as Marquette calls it—took its place in geography. As we have seen, Marquette was already in-



formed as to its course, and the fact that near its sources were streams flowing into the Pacific. He notes this true theory simply with no parade or pretence, but merely with a pious wish that he might be able in person to test the practicability of the route which he indicated, and which in our century Lewis and Clarke explored.

Past the mouth of the turbid Missouri, past a dreaded whirlpool, past the Ohio that came from the land of the Shawnees, as he knew and notes, on to the land where canebrakes lined the shores and mosquitoes swarmed in myriads. Days again without seeing any sign of man, till a hostile demonstration is made from the shore by a roving band with guns, axes, and other European articles, bought from white settlements on the east, Florida or Carolina.

It was not till they had nearly reached the mouth of the St. Francis that they found the second village, the castle of the Metchigamea tribe. The Illinois had been friendly. These Indians evinced every sign of hostility.

The war-cry was raised, braves lined the banks, while others, launching their great dug-out canoes, pushed out into the stream to arrest their progress and prevent their flight. In vain the missionary held out the calumet of peace, a war-club was hurled at him, and expecting to be riddled by volleys of arrows, the helpless white men commended themselves to their patroness and guide, the Blessed Virgin Immaculate. At once the sachems stilled the storm, chiefs advanced, and, throwing their bows and arrows into the canoes, drew them to the shore. Through one who spoke Illinois, the explorers told their mission, and asked how far they were from the sea. But there was little these men could tell the French. They referred them to the Quappas or Arkansas, some twenty-five miles below, then, regaling the explorers with corn and fish, sent them on their way.

An Arkansas canoe came out to welcome them, a chief flourishing the great calumet of peace. This was a prelude to a hearty welcome at their village on the eastern shore. Here, too, the explorers found proofs of European intercourse, though it proved to be only through other tribes, as hostile nations cut off the Arkansas from all approach to white

settlements. They were now in Indian calculation only ten days' sail from the mouth of the Mississippi, which each tells us he believed they could accomplish in half that time.

They rested for a day in this town of naked men and ill-clad women, who lived by the buffalo hunt, raising only corn and melons; their long bark cabins showing no signs of any art but pottery. Meanwhile Marquette and Joliet deliberated on their further course. They were nearing the range of the Spaniards, ever jealous of any encroachment within the limits they claimed. They had acquired much information in regard to more than eighty Indian villages, although they saw so few, they had traced the river and knew its general direction, its branches, the condition of the country, the paucity of the Indian tribes on the upper waters, and had established to a certainty that the river entered the Gulf of Mexico. Only a few hundred miles more lay between them and the gulf.

Should they go on and reach the mouth at the risk of falling into the hands of the Spaniards, which meant perpetual imprisonment; or should they, satisfied with having solved the great question so long debated among the explorers of the West, return and report what had been accomplished? As we now know, their fear of the Spaniards was groundless, but the tribes near the mouth might never have allowed them to escape with life, and they evidently had not counted fully the labor of that midsummer ascent of the Mississippi.

They decided to return, and after that brief rest in the Arkansas village on Indian Point, Mississippi, they gathered once more on the shore by their northern-built canoes. It was the 17th day of July, 1673, just two hundred and five years ago, the moment that we have met to-day to commemorate. It was the crowning point of the work of Joliet and Marquette. They had borne the cross of Christendom and the arms of France down the Mississippi almost to its mouth; they had won the friendship of unknown tribes; they had learned the topography of the great valley and mapped out the river, its tributaries, the towns and tribes; they knew its resources.

To-day they began their triumphal voyage home, rich in good done, and in valuable in-

formation acquired, grand and peaceful conquerors of the Mississippi, noble Marquette and noble Joliet.

Since the discovery of Marquette's remains at Pointe Saint Ignace steps have been taken to rear a monument there to show the spot whence the expedition started, the spot to which the missionary explorer, dying like a brave soldier, doing duty to his latest breath, was borne from his temporary tomb.

This society may well rear a modest monument at Indian Point—Point Joliet, let us call it—to mark the termination of this adventurous voyage, and record that there, July 17, 1673, Marquette and Joliet considered their task accomplished in solving the great question. One face of the monument may also record that not far from that spot long lay, in an unknown grave, the remains of Pierre Liguette Laclede, the founder of St. Louis.

To-day Missouri recognizes fully the title of Joliet and Marquette as the first explorers, as Wisconsin has already done. Clear as the evidence was, the followers of La Salle in the seventeenth century, disputed their claim. In our day the Normans, Margry and Gravier, renew the controversy, raising a host of shadowy claims which vanish when you try to grasp them, each more unsubstantial than the last. They have only led to searches which brought to light maps and documents substantiating by a chain of testimony the claim of the two whom we honor.

Launching their canoes amid the farewells of their Arkansas friends, they began to stem the current of the river. They had descended the Mississippi for more than a thousand miles, borne onward by its current; now, in the midst of the heats of July, they were to toil painfully up. We have few details of this tedious passage, this long struggle of men weakened by the heats and confinement in a canoe; days passed in the same monotonous way. The shore offered no refuge in its swampy margin; no haven appeared where they could refresh and recruit till reaching the mouth of the Illinois River. Here they entered a gentler stream with inviting banks, a perfect paradise in their eyes.

At old Kaskaskia, on the upper waters of the Illinois, Marquette rested to inaugurate a mission; and, guided thence to Lake Michigan,



the two explorers reached Green Bay in September, worn out with exposure—Marquette, indeed, with the seeds of a fatal malady in his system.

While that missionary resumed his labors at his Mackinac chapel, Joliet, in the spring descended to Montreal, but at the Lachine rapids his canoe turned, three of his party perished, and his box of papers and maps relating to the West was engulfed for ever. He himself, after four hours' struggle in the water, was rescued in an insensible condition by some fishermen. He had passed through a thousand dangers, descended nearly fifty rapids on his way to meet this terrible disaster in sight of Montreal.

Marquette's map and his narrative, imbued with all his tender piety and unselfish devotion, alone survived. It is a charming picture of a pure, good man, who can never be suspected of making a false claim.

Joliet drew up a brief account of his discoveries, and solicited from the king a grant in the vast territory which he had added to the realm of France. He was curtly refused, and no reward was bestowed upon him until later services in various fields compelled a tardy acknowledgment.

Laclede fulfilled his wish. Born in Quebec, and baptized in the shadow of the cathedral dedicated to St. Louis and the Immaculate Conception, Joliet received the name of the sainted king of France, and had his monarch permitted him to colonize this land he would certainly have founded a city of St. Louis.

Marquette sought no guerdon. Though broken in health, he kept his promise to the Illinois. He set out for Kaskaskia, but was forced to winter at Chicago, where his hut was the first white habitation and chapel. At Kaskaskia he felt that his death was at hand, and endeavored to reach his chapel at Mackinac. As his faithful men conveyed him along the shore of Lake Michigan he pointed out a place for his burial, and bade them put him ashore. Beneath a rude bark shelter he breathed his last. He had given instructions for his burial, consoled his companions, and the last act of his ministry was to hear their confessions. He prepared for death cheerfully, thanking God that he died bereft of all human comfort and died in the society of Jesus. With his eyes raised above his crucifix,

as if fixed on some beloved object, with a countenance all radiant with smiles, the discoverer of the Mississippi expired without a struggle.

Two years after his Ottawa Indians, passing that way, took up his body, cleansed the bones, and, putting them in a box of bark, conveyed them to Point St. Ignace, where they were with solemn rite deposited in a little vault in the middle of the church. This edifice was burned down in 1700, and in time all trace of the site and of Marquette's tomb was lost, till last year, when the Rev. Edward Jucker discovered and identified both, but only to find that the tomb had been rifled, evidently by some Indian medicine man, who wished the bones of the great priest as a magical power. The remnants of the box and some fragments of bones were piously gathered to be placed under a monument in his honor.

And where does Joliet lie? We trace him by his still extant maps of the Western country; then exploring the Saguenay to Hudson's bay and mapping it; obtaining a grant of the Mingan Isles and of Anticosti; engaged in fisheries; making charts of the St. Lawrence and of Labrador; his establishments all destroyed by Phips; visiting France in 1695 and appointed king's hydrographer at Quebec. He died apparently in 1700, and lies in an unhonored tomb on the Mingan Isles.

The family of Marquette still exists in France, proud of one who added such lustre to their name. The descendants of Joliet have filled many places of honor in Canada down to our day both in Church and state, and at this very moment the archbishop of the ancient see of Quebec and the archbishop of St. Boniface in Manitoba claim descent from Louis Joliet.

Cortes once pushed his way to the carriage of Charles V., and when the emperor king haughtily demanded, "Who are you?" the conqueror of Mexico replied as haughtily: "One who gave you more kingdoms than your ancestors left you provinces."

Marquette and Joliet, ignored by Louis XIV., might, amid the gay circle of his courtiers, have told him the same. Their peaceful conquest gave into the grasp of France the two great river systems of North America,

the St. Lawrence and Mississippi. In the valley of the Mississippi alone, the loveliest, richest and most wonderful on earth, they gave France what, had she known how to use it, would have made her the mightiest and happiest of nations. No other river on earth traverses like the Mississippi every variety of climate, no other valley is so evenly watered, so rich in gold, silver, lead, iron, and coal; none has a more fertile soil, scenery more grand and picturesque, none greater advantages for commerce.

Yet France overlooked all this. Even La Salle, who followed Marquette and Joliet, aristocrat trying to be a merchant, courtier aspiring to rule, eager for a title, but with no idea of founding a state, with the whole valley of the Mississippi in his hand—this man left it to land in Texas and waste men and time, and finally life, in a vain attempt to reach and rob the mines of Santa Barbara, like a buccaner.

Looking back at the early history of this continent, we can only wonder at the utter lack of all wisdom evinced by European governments in their American affairs. They never understood the value of this country; they never understood colonization or its principles. Not an English statesman was a statesman for America; not one in France. The wisdom of England's great philosopher, when tested on an American state, was folly. It is strange, and yet it is true, that the only Englishman who seems to have formed any idea of the future greatness of America, who attempted to increase it, bind all the colonies into one great state, and wrest from France the sway which impeded English expansion, was the sovereign who of all others is pointed at as a man of incapacity, James II., the last of the Stuarts.

The explorers of the Mississippi, in laying that valley at the feet of Louis XIV., might have said: "Another *Jacquerie* is at hand. Your people, wasted by long wars, are doubly wasted by the prevailing extravagance and licentiousness of the upper classes. France cannot support her children. Create a new France in this glorious part of America. See what has prospered there and what has failed. Only communities bound by some vital tie thrive and succeed, while chance emigration, where whole families do not go together with

all the elements of a community, fall or pine. New England with her settlers forming a community of families, bound by a deep religious bond, with every trade, with church and school, prospers on the almost sterile coast. Canada owes her preservation and progress both at Quebec and Montreal to the same religious and community elements. From some exhausted province in France, from that Acadian shore in America where England threatens a noble community of colonists, transplant whole villages to the Mississippi valley—farmers with their families and implements of agriculture, carpenters with their tools, the blacksmith with his smithy, the teacher to continue his school, the clergyman to resume his wonted duties. Under their industry the land will yield beyond all calculation. France can then support her children, and those who have gone will form a new France, strong in itself and strengthening the old."

But France did nothing. Her only course was to cripple colonization by leaving the land of Marquette and Joliet to great soulless companies.

She neglected the Acadians. England could afford to send ships to carry off seven thousand and scatter them in destitution through her colonies. France had not forecast or generosity enough to transport them with their household goods to this valley, where they would have become great and powerful, having in themselves every element of success. If the few stragglers who revived Acadia in Louisiana thrive and prospered, who can estimate the progress to be made by the whole Acadian population transferred under favorable circumstances?

The English colonies that prospered from the outset were those where families settled bound by some potent tie—New England, Maryland, Pennsylvania—elsewhere only when moulded by disaster into a community. The English Government did nothing. When Townshend described the American colonies as "children planted by our care, nourished up by our indulgence, and protected by our arms," Burke, in a strain of indignant oratory, showed the fallacy of it all, yet even he did not see the true element, the family as the basis of the community, the community of the state, with some potent tie, some deep princi-



ple holding the families together, higher and greater than patriotism or love of country.

Even at our revolution there was no English statesman able to consider what a series of communities which, amid all the struggles and trials of early settlement, had risen in a century and a half from a handful to six millions of people would with more favorable circumstances become in another century. There was no man in Great Britain wise enough to look beyond the petty questions on which they imperilled an empire, and to attempt to shape the destinies of America, so as to render it happy in itself and a tower of strength to England.

While Great Britain showed such utter want of statesmen, we look in vain for them in France or Spain. Even Colbert and Talon aimed only at trade. No French minister ever studied for a day how to make the Mississippi Valley the granary, the mine of France. Acquired without an effort on her part, it was as lightly lost. France left England and Spain to plant on the opposite banks of the great river their standards, so typical of adverse ideas, alike only in misgoverning America.

England did nothing for the eastern shore, Spain nothing for the western. We find in that period no great aid rendered to your progress. The foundation of your city was the last wave of the old Canadian element, French in name and origin when the power and the flag of France had fallen.

In the colonies on the coast was the germ of the great republic. An expansion of the old system of communities, it soon swelled beyond the narrow borders hemmed in by the Alleghenies. With this inherent life of its own, absorbing, adapting to its formed community, and imbuing with its spirit every new element it has in a hundred years made the great valley rich beyond compare.

It is not for me to depict what you are to-day, what the multitudinous States have accomplished and are accomplishing. Still less is it mine to attempt to pierce the future and estimate the greatness of a century hence. I can only rejoice in your greatness and prosperity, and looking back at the progress of two centuries, express my fervent wish and hope that two centuries hence will show undimmed prosperity, founded on the highest and truest principles.

